

DIRECTIONS

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION of TENNESSEE

Many Caring People, One Strong Voice

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MEGA-FUN at MegaConference!

DSPATers Party Hearty at Awards Functions

DSPATers know how to have a good time! It was time to throw down on Friday evening of the MegaConference as the organization held its award reception. Over 150 persons, including DSP's, supported individuals, families, providers, DMRS officials and various other stakeholders, enjoyed refreshments, eats and dancing.

Of course the main item on the agenda was awards and judging by



DSPAT Above and Beyond Award Winners.



DMRS Deputy Commissioner Stephen Norris receives the DSPAT Hero Award from Deputy Director John Clayton, left, and Director Earl Foxx, Jr., right.

the recognition there are a great many DSP's doing outstanding jobs across the state.

"I'm telling you the spotlight was a thousand degrees shining on those folks that night," said DSPAT Director Earl Foxx. "I see it all the time; our DSP's stepping to the front and going above and beyond their regular responsibilities. We've got it going on



DMRS Assistant Commissioner Joanna Damons receives DSPAT's highest award, the Champion Award.



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Progress Report

Earl Foxx, Jr.

DSPAT continues to grow its membership base and advocate the highest standards for our workforce statewide and nationally. DSPAT is forwarding its vision to build a stronger DSP workforce and increase partnerships with multiple stakeholders who invest time and resources in bettering the system as a whole.

DSPAT's current membership stands at around 750 persons and continues to grow at a pace that can only make us proud. We work hard to assure the very best training and credentialing. We seek recognition so DSP's can feel valued. We seek compensation increases for performing a job responsibility worthy of a professional.

- DSPAT is currently holding a statewide development certificate program for members and non-members.
- DSPAT participated in the Quality Assurance and Mentoring DSP video.
- DSPAT is currently holding statewide focus groups funded by the DD Council to identify what is working best for our workforce. We want to identify potential DSP's, leaders and mentors. We have completed focus group meetings in Nashville, Tullahoma, Chattanooga and Knoxville. Coming soon will be groups conducted in West Tennessee.
- DSPAT continues to work hand-in-hand with DMRS on a bi-monthly newsletter, Directions, as well as the new DSP recognition program. We have awarded several DSP's statewide.
- DSPAT has met with several training leaders across the state to

discuss credentialing, training and apprenticeship programs. We have been researching the Home Managers Technical Certificate program that exists in West Tennessee and are planning to meet with Dr. Vava Cook, professor at Southwest Community College in Memphis. We are in the process of putting together a workforce committee with the support of DMRS Deputy Commissioner Stephen Norris and multiple stakeholders.

- DSPAT meets monthly with Deputy Commissioner Norris.
- DSPAT meets regularly with the director of The Arc of Tennessee as well as the group's staff to discuss various issues. We continue to work on our 501c3 non-profit status.
- DSPAT attends DMRS Advisory Council meetings monthly. We are pleased to see the progress that has been made with this group of great stakeholders.
- DSPAT works with the state team for the Alliance for Full Participation.
- DSPAT is a member of the NADSP and has been invited to assume a stronger role in the future. We will attend a DSP conference in Minneapolis in November.
- DSPAT supports The Arc of Tennessee MegaConference and played a major role in that event earlier this month. Thanks to The Arc for a wonderful conference.
- We will continue our very successful presentation/recognition event to promote our vision and increase membership.
- We have a great partnership with TNCO and TNCOActs. They are credited with developing one of only three credentialing trainings in the entire nation, as well as

other trainings such as the Seasoned Veterans training that a group of DSP's in East Tennessee completed.

- We are prepared to provide leadership training as well as mentoring programs to DSP's across the state.
- DSPAT advocated for a wage increase for DSP's over the last eight months. On March 1st DMRS and TennCare implemented a DSP wage increase. ●

MegaConference...cont.

with our workforce! Recruiting, training and all the other programs we've put in place, our folks are getting better by the day."

Since last fall over 90 DSP's have been recognized through the DSPAT/DMRS Recognition Program. The highlight of the night was the Above and Beyond Awards going to eight DSP's. Receiving \$1,600 were Eva Little, SRVS and Belinda Beeler, Cerebral Palsy. Betty Holt, Progress Inc.; Sherry Reynolds, Michael Dunn Center; Chris Burk, Dickson Developmental Center; Donna Osborne, Dawn of Hope; Kathy Woodroff, Rutherford County Adult Center and Doris Martin, SRVS took home \$1,500.

Thirty \$30.00 gift cards were presented as Pat on the Back Awards. DMRS Deputy Commissioner Stephen Norris received DSPAT's Hero Award and Assistant Commissioner Joanna Damons collected the organization's highest honor, the Champion Award.

Mass Mutual Finance of Knoxville contributed 20 door prizes to the event. ●

SUPER WEDNESDAY SUCCESSFUL

First DSP Playoffs a Big Hit

DSP's from across the state participated in the first annual Tennessee Community Organizations (TNCO) DSP Playoffs held during the MegaConference. DSP's demonstrated their skills, knowledge and expertise in supporting individuals with developmental disabilities.

The competition was fierce as DSP's went through a variety of tasks they experience or might experience on the job. The event was educational and rewarding, bringing attention to the profession and its demanding responsibilities.

"This was a very good exercise and I applaud TNCO and DSPAT on putting this together," said DMRS Deputy Commissioner Stephen Norris. "The contestants were very much into the tests. I enjoyed watching and was impressed with the skills of the DSP's. What I saw translates into good care for the persons we support." ●



Eddie Baron, who starred in the movie *The Ringer*, made an appearance at the MegaConference. Shown here with TNCO Director Robin Atwood (L) and DSPAT Director Earl Foxx, Jr.



Direct from



Earl Foxx, Jr., DSPAT Director.

DSPAT continues to promote the well-being of Direct Support Professionals throughout Tennessee by working with all stakeholders to increase wages and help develop our DSP curriculum statewide. We are also focused on attaining the respect DSP's deserve for performing responsibilities that require true professionals. We must not forget this is our main purpose! We as human beings, the entire state

and nation have a responsibility to perform public service throughout our communities to ensure that the less fortunate, minorities and "differently-abled" receive fair opportunities to live a decent and rewarding life.

Most of us complain from time to time about the Federal and State taxes withheld from our earnings. We expect our tax dollars to support the most vulnerable people in our communities as well as many other efforts such as a clean environment, national security and natural disaster relief. We do not complain as much when we see our hard earned money put to use in the best ways possible.

Let us work together to ensure that no one is being over-looked when it comes to funding and support for their needs. We must make sure that we are not wasting time or resources. We must do things the right way!

How long should a person wait to be provided with the best possible support in the best possible manner? Now, when I say the best possible manner I say it knowing that at times there will be

mistakes. However, there is a way to make sure that our system is operating smoothly at all times: Teamwork!

DSPAT's engine is fueled by people power. The encouragement and support that we receive on a day to day basis from the many people who share and help in executing our vision, is invaluable. DSPAT is driven by our moral and ethical values with the overall common sense that reminds us to constantly care for our people first.

Lastly, DSPAT is spit-polished with the ability to confront issues of concern head-on without wavering or buckling under pressure. With professionalism and a strong desire to resolve problems, we all succeed.

DSPAT will continue to work hard to see that the front line, Tennessee DSP's, receive the resources needed to succeed, such as offering training opportunities and wage and benefit increases. The DSP's of Tennessee, through our teamwork and dedication are, and will continue to be seen as "Many Caring People, One Strong Voice." God bless you all. ●

DSP Professional Development Certificate Program

At DSPAT, we are always looking for ways to bring unique and enriching learning experiences to our valued members. The DSP Professional Development Certificate Program is a new program designed to provide our members with continuous multi-faceted learning that will lead toward a certificate in professional development. We want to strengthen the knowledge base of the DSP so that the DSP will have greater job/life satisfaction and performance.

Another benefit of this program is DSP's, from diverse backgrounds and locations, will have the opportunity to engage in thought-provoking dialogue that will result in the exchange of valuable knowledge and know-how. Working together is a skill that is much needed in the field of Direct Support. This program will assist DSP's in understanding their

individual personality and style for better interpersonal working relationships.

Although this program is not mandatory, DSPs will find it both personally and professionally satisfying.

Four Areas of Focus

- Learning Modules
- Leadership Modules
- Direct Support Modules
- Life Coaching Modules

Requirements

Participant must complete at least 30 hours to receive certificate.

Attendance

Once you register for the program, a sign-in form will be passed out during each event to keep track of your hours.

You will also receive a teleconference number and pin if you would like to call in.

Cost

Free to DSPs, \$25.00 to non-DSPs.

Location

DSPAT, 44 Vantage Way, Suite 550, Conference Room, Nashville, TN 37228. All classes will be accessible via teleconference.

Graduation

Takes place the summer of 2006.

- Please visit our website at www.dspat.org for more information about the Professional Development Certificate Program

What is ICF/MR?

John Clayton

What is ICF/MR? I've been asked this question repeatedly over the years when I talk about my work in this field of developmental disabilities. Quite simply, it stands for: Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded.

I've worked for the past five years managing a community based ICF/MR. This is a home which is very much like any other home that supports individuals with developmental disabilities. Staffing ratios are set according to the needs of the individuals.

The day begins with breakfast and showers. The kitchen is cleaned up. Then we head out into the community to help individuals we serve to build natural supports and participate in activities that are of interest to them. Everything is built around the ISP and the ISP is built around the individual.

We work closely with various therapists due to the nature of multiple disabilities. Quite often these therapies are worked into community settings, such as the recent trip that we took to the Tennessee aquarium in Chattanooga. This was a wonderful opportunity for two individuals to explore an environment that they had never been exposed to. The looks of wonder on their faces made the two hour drive worth every moment of the outing. The outing also afforded good opportunities to teach communication, safety skills, and social skills while the guys were curiously exploring their surroundings.

We also help individuals to learn to become more independent within the home. We work in lessons at every opportunity that presents itself. Sometimes the lessons we try to teach are as simple as shaking a persons hand instead of grabbing inappropriately. Individuals that we support are always learning more about self help skills such as

becoming more independent with hygiene, dressing, and feeding themselves. As DSP's (Direct Support Professionals) at an ICF/MR we teach, care for, cook for, and help with many aspects of the lives of those we care for. This is not different from any other residential setting.

I realize that the ICF/MR home that I work at is just as unique as any home can be. The main difference between ICF/MR and supported living or residential services is the source of funding and the additional regulatory agencies that inspect us. We are surveyed by the Department of Health along with all of the other surveyors that inspect supported living and residential homes. This does not affect the day to day routine of the Individuals within the household.

There is also a set criteria that an individual must meet in order to qualify for admission to an ICF/MR. The individual must require a level of care in order to be admitted to an ICF/MR. The level of care criteria must be evidenced by a PAE (pre admission evaluation) application which has been approved by the Bureau of TennCare.

There are also three developmental centers in Tennessee that are licensed ICF/MR facilities. They are Greene Valley Developmental Center, Arlington Developmental Center, and Clover Bottom Developmental Center. These are institutions that are run by the state of Tennessee. They are licensed as ICF/MR.

The institutional model is very different from the residential, or community based, model. I have no experience with the institutional model. I understand that they operate much like the community model but differ in the fact that they are larger and less personal than the very personalized home environment in which I work.

I do know that I am very proud to be a part of the lives of the individuals that I serve who live in a wonderful home that is classified as ICF/MR. ●

If You're Looking for A Place Where You Can...

- Join a professional association
- Connect with other direct support professionals throughout the state
- Gain access to training opportunities and educational experiences
- Find out about job openings
- Volunteer your services, talents and gifts
- Attend conferences at a discount
- Build relationships between DSP's, self-advocates, families and others
- Enhance the status of the direct support professional, including increased wages

...then join DSPAT today!

Annual membership is only \$10.00. Your agency may pay for your membership. Ask your agency's human resource manager if you qualify. To join or to arrange for a DSPAT information session to be held for your group, call DSPAT Director Earl Foxx, Jr., at 615-596-5321 or email efoxx@dspat.org ●

D . S . P . A . T

Direct Support Professional's Association of Tennessee Recognition Program

PURPOSE

1. The Recognition Program is a collaborative effort of the Direct Support Professionals Association of Tennessee (DSPAT) and The Division of Mental Retardation Services (DMRS). The purpose of the Recognition Program is to recognize the contributions of Direct Support Professionals in their support of people with a disability in their community, and who demonstrate the values that Direct Support Professionals exemplify in our Code of Ethics.
2. We want to recognize Direct Support Professionals who are trustworthy, work hard, and "go the extra mile". All Tennesseans should be proud of a Direct Support Professional workforce that is truly focused on building and improving the quality of life for each person they support. Actually, that's what being a DSP is all about!

CODE OF ETHICS

- **PERSON CENTERED SUPPORTS:** As a DSP, my first allegiance is to the person I support; all other activities and functions I perform flow from this allegiance.
- **PROMOTING PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL BEING:** As a DSP, I am responsible for supporting the emotional, physical and personal well-being of the individuals receiving support while being attentive and energetic in reducing their risk of harm.
- **INTEGRITY AND RESPONSIBILITY:** As a DSP, I will support the mission and vitality of my profession to assist people in leading self-directed lives and to foster a spirit of partnership with the people I support, other professionals and the community.
- **CONFIDENTIALITY:** As a DSP, I will safeguard and respect the confidentiality and privacy of the people I support.
- **JUSTICE, FAIRNESS, AND EQUITY:** As a DSP, I will promote and practice justice, fairness, and equity for

the people I support and the community as a whole. I will affirm the human and civil rights and responsibilities of the people I support.

- **RESPECT:** As a DSP, I will respect the human dignity and uniqueness of the people I support. I will recognize each person I support as valuable and help others understand their value.
- **RELATIONSHIPS:** As a DSP, I will assist the people I support to develop and maintain relationships.
- **SELF-DETERMINATION:** As a DSP, I will assist the people I support to direct the course of their own lives.
- **ADVOCACY:** As a DSP, I will advocate with the people I support for justice, inclusion, and full community participation.

This draft Code of Ethics has been developed by the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals.

NOMINATIONS *Who can nominate a DSP for an award?*

1. Anyone can recommend a DSP for an award. That would include: people with a disability, family members, co-workers, supervisors, employers, DMRS employees, other stakeholders, or any member of the community who wants to acknowledge a Direct Support professional for doing a "great job".
2. Nominations should be written clearly, and be easy to read. Pictures of the nominee working with the person(s) they support, newspaper articles or other supporting information should be included with your nomination if possible.
3. A well written description (in your own words) of why you are nominating your candidate for an award will assist selection committee members to choose from the best Direct Support Professionals nominated in your Region of the State of Tennessee.

DESCRIPTION *Information you will want to include!*

1. Your description should include as many of the values we recognize in our Code of Ethics (above or review at www.dspat.org), within the details of why you have nominated your candidate.

cont. next page

2. Additional criteria for nominating a DSP for an award, would include the details of how your candidate meets or exceeds the following requirements;
 - Excellent Attendance Record
 - Volunteers for overtime when needed
 - Takes extra training to improve skills
 - Exceptional relationship with the person(s) they support
 - Supports the person(s) in special activities
 - Helps build relationships between the person(s) they support and family, friends, church members, etc.
 - Maintains a good relationship with co-workers
 - Demonstrates the values of our Code of Ethics

DSP RECOGNITION PROGRAM HAS FOUR LEVELS

Pat on the Back Awards

(75 winners per year) (\$30 gift card)

Monthly Awards

(3 winners from each region) (\$100 each)

- Criteria...Written description of nominee should include at least 2 values from our Code of Ethics
-

Quarterly Awards

(1 winner from each region, selected from monthly winners) (\$750 each)

- Criteria...Written description of nominee should include at least 4 values from our Code of Ethics
-

Above and Beyond Awards

(9 winners per year) (\$1,500 each)

- Criteria...Written description of nominee should include at least 6 values from our Code of Ethics
-

DEADLINES

1. Nominations for each award needs to be received by the last day of the month.
2. Please send nominations via e-mail or fax to Jameka Evans, at Fax 615 248-5879 or E-mail JEvans@TheArcTn.org

SELECTION PROCESS

- Nominations are only considered the month they are submitted, if you want your nomination to be re-considered please resubmit for following month.
1. Every effort will be made to select winners from all three grand regions of the state.
 2. After nominations are received, packets with copies of all nominations are sent to each member of the Selection Committee as early as possible.

3. Each committee member will score their top three candidates.
4. Point Values for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices will be awarded as follows;
 - 1st choice 2 points
 - 2nd choice 1 point
 - 3rd choice .5 point
5. If there are more than three nominations for an award, only score your top three choices.
6. If there are not enough nominations for an award from one region, committee members can vote for their next choice from one of the other two regions.
7. If there is a tie on scoring then selection committee members will make every attempt to resolve the issue. If resolution is difficult to ascertain after discussion, Earl Foxx will make the final decision.
8. Every effort will be made to award the indicated number of awards each month.
9. All winners will be screened to ensure DMRS background checks have been conducted, and candidate's nomination is supported and approved by employer.

NOTIFICATION

1. Award winners will be officially notified by a letter co-authored and signed by DSPAT's Earl Foxx and DMRS' Brenda Clark on behalf of the selection committee...copied to the provider agency.
2. Form will be included with letter, that winner must return form via fax or e-mail prior to receipt of award. Form will include; name, address, phone number, personal information needed for tax purposes, and an alternative phone number if applicable.
3. Provider also must fill out and return form via fax or e-mail.

PRESENTATION

1. Awards will be distributed by Earl Foxx, and Brenda Clark (or other representative of DMRS) whenever possible.
2. Every attempt will be made to recognize and celebrate the Award winners at;
 - DPAT presentations at community provider
 - DSPAT regional activities
 - DSPAT activity at the Annual Tennessee Disability MegaConference ●

PRICELESS MEMORIES

An ICF/MR Experience

By Petie Clinton LPN Manager, ICF/MR
Michael Dunn Center

What is more exciting to a die-hard basketball fan than spending an evening with the famous HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS? Add into the equation an abundance of popcorn, cotton candy, and coke and you have a certain level of heaven few people ever get to experience. That is just the beginning of the night Keri Stewart enjoyed recently.

The start of the trip held challenges such as not knowing how to get there, wheelchair issues, and the long lines at the ticket counter. Once we were in our seats, popcorn in hand, all of the challenges seemed to disappear. We were there...and we were ready.

The entire game was action packed, Keri only took her eyes off of the court when a friend came walking by. Harold Barton, with popcorn bucket in hand, was making his way to his seat and stopped to say hello. In true Harold fashion he made us feel that we were the most beautiful women there.

At one point in the evening Keri showed an interest in visiting the souvenir stand. You all know the place well, the mini-store, where for a small fortune, you can obtain a take-home memory of the event. Without hesitation, she chose a basketball and then happily returned to her seat.

As intermission approached it was announced that the players would be available for autographs at the end of the game. After the fourth quarter we made our way down to the floor, along with the other hundreds of fans, in hopes of getting the basketball autographed. I am not exaggerating when I say there were hundreds, maybe even thousands, of people standing around the court being held back from the players by only a rope.

As everyone around us held up their souvenirs yelling for attention from the players, Keri sat quietly in her chair. She was holding her ball in her lap patiently waiting for an autograph. Suddenly, from out of nowhere, a man in a dark suit walked over and removed the rope in front of where Keri was sitting. Inviting Keri inside to obtain her autographs from not one, but all of the Globetrotters. After the last player signed Keri exited Thompson Boiling Arena with her priceless take home memory.

Harlem Globetrotter ticket	\$30.50
Coke, Popcorn, Cotton Candy	\$15.00
Souvenir	\$25.00
Keri's Meaningful Day	PRICELESS!

The Direct Support Professional Association of Tennessee advocates a high standard of care for people with disabilities and encourages training as well as recognition for all direct support personnel. By promoting education and peer connections we are creating a better caliber workforce that will elevate the quality of life for the people we support as well as for ourselves. With many caring people we will be one strong voice.

**Direct Support Professionals Association
of Tennessee, Inc.**
A Chapter of the National Alliance for Direct Support

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